

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH JULY, 1912.

THE Committee met at 10.30 a.m. in room A.

Present: Mr. Atmore, Hon. Mr. Hanan, Mr. Lang, Mr. Lee, Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie, Mr. Seddon, and Mr. G. M. Thomson.

Mr. McCallum, M.P., attended the meeting.

The order of reference setting up the Committee was read, also an extract from the Journals of the House granting an extension of three days in which to report.

Proposed by Mr. G. M. Thomson, and seconded by Mr. Lee, That the Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie be appointed Chairman.

On the question being put, it was carried unanimously.

The Clerk produced a letter, marked "A," written by William Sinclair (see Appendix).

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. G. M. Thomson, That the Chairman do ask the House to grant a further extension until one week after the House meets in which to report.

Resolved, That counsel and the Press be admitted to the proceedings of the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned.

THURSDAY, 1ST AUGUST, 1912.

The Committee met at 10.30 a.m., pursuant to notice.

Present: Mr. Atmore, Hon. Mr. Fraser, Mr. Hanan, Mr. Lang, Mr. Lee, Mr. Seddon, and Mr. G. M. Thomson.

The Clerk stated that the Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie had asked him to inform the Committee that, as he would be away from Wellington, it would be necessary to elect another Chairman.

Proposed by Mr. Lang, and seconded by Mr. Atmore, That Mr. Hanan be appointed Chairman.

On the question being put, it was carried unanimously.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Correspondence was read by the Clerk.

Sir Arthur Guinness, Speaker, attended and gave an opinion as to the scope of the order of reference.

Resolved to take evidence *re* the publication of the letter.

The Press reporters were admitted.

Mr. Skerrett, K.C., with him Mr. S. A. Atkinson, appeared on behalf of Mr. McCallum.

The evidence was taken down in shorthand.

(1.) William Sinclair, barrister and solicitor, Blenheim, was sworn, and gave evidence on his own behalf, and was examined by Mr. Skerrett, K.C., and the members of the Committee. (See Appendix).

(2.) William Andrew Veitch, auctioneer, Wanganui, and a member of Parliament, was sworn and examined by Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Skerrett, K.C.

(3.) Richard McCallum, M.P., Wairau, was sworn and examined by Mr. Skerrett, K.C., and members of the Committee.

Mr. Sinclair then addressed the Committee, and was examined by Mr. Skerrett, K.C., and members of the Committee.

Strangers then retired, and the Committee deliberated.

Resolved to report as follows:—

The Committee of Privilege appointed to inquire into and report on the publication of a letter written by William Sinclair to William Carr on the 25th March last reflecting on the character of Richard McCallum, a member of this House, has the honour to report that, after taking evidence herein, it finds:—

(1.) That the said letter was written by William Sinclair and sent by him to and received by William Carr.

(2.) That a copy of this letter was signed by William Sinclair and sent by him to and received by William Andrew Veitch, a member of Parliament, under cover of a letter addressed to the said William Andrew Veitch marked "Private and confidential."

(3.) That William Andrew Veitch gave the copy of the letter referred to in paragraph 2 and received by him to Richard McCallum on or about the 3rd July, 1912.

(4.) The Committee is of opinion that the said letter was published by the said William Sinclair, and is not a privileged communication.

The Committee further reports that a desire was expressed by William Sinclair to be heard at the bar of the House before the breach of privilege is finally dealt with.

Resolved, That the Chairman be empowered to sign these minutes, and that a vote of thanks be accorded to him for his services.